

**REMARKS**

Submitted herewith are three sheets of replacement drawings with new Figs. 1-3. In view of these actions and the following remarks, further consideration of this application is requested.

With regard to the objection to the drawings, the accompanying three sheets of replacement drawings correct Figs. 1-3, e.g., by eliminating the shading and improving the lines. Therefore, the objection to the drawings should be withdrawn and such action is requested.

The Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter with regard to claims 13-16 has been noted with appreciation, but since claim 11 from which they depend are also considered patentable, no action has been taken at this time to place these claims in allowable independent form.

Claims 9-12 continue to be rejected under 35 USC § 102 based on the disclosure of the Hedgaard WIPO publication (which corresponds to US Patent 6,915,669). This rejection is inappropriate for the following reasons.

In responding to the arguments previously presented, the Examiner contended that Hedgaard teaches a gripping member with an inner part 16 and an outer part 8 between which the pelt 6 is located. However, this assessment of the Examiner is clearly erroneous as is clear from both the specification and the sole figure of Hedgaard. Element 8 is not part of a gripper but rather are rollers by which the pelt board "is supported against tipping over to the sides. Such rollers cannot "grip" the pelt because their rolling movement will allow relative movement between them and the pelt. As for the grippers 16, it is simply not understandable how the Examiner can contend that they are "inner" parts since they are clearly shown to be on the exterior side of the pelt and since the Hedgaard expressly states that the grippers engage the back and leg sides of the pelt (see, lines 30-33 of page 3 and claim 4), without any mention of the leather inner side. However, even assuming that the grippers engage both the leather side of the pelt (not shown) as well as the fur side of the pelt, to provide retention of the lower end of the pelt during advancing of the pelt board during the stretching procedure. because the extent of the grippers 16 is shown as being relatively narrow and are NOT

extending along substantially the whole periphery of the lower end of the pelt, but only in some narrow extent on each side of the surface of the pelt board, this aspect of the invention is clearly not taught or even suggested whereby the fastening portions of the patent application will extend along substantially along the whole periphery of the pelt board at the lower end of the pelt (as is clearly shown, for example, in Figs. 5, 8, & 9 of the present application), with an inner part gripping the leather side of the pelt, and an outer part gripping the hair side of the pelt, so that the lower end of the pelt is clamped in between the inner part and the outer part during the stretching procedure in a manner that enables a larger stretching force to be exerted on the pelt to be stretched by the stretching machine, without damaging the pelt where the pelt is secured between the gripping portions since the grippers are not confined to small portions of the pelt as in Hedegaard.

Moreover, the rollers 8 do not cooperate with the grippers 16 fastening of the lower end of the pelt in a fixed position between them, nor do the rollers 8 have sides “facing towards the pelt board” that are “configured to match the shape of the pelt board” so as to “engage with the lower end of the pelt substantially along the whole of the outside periphery of the pelt board” as set forth in claim 11.

Furthermore, there is no disclosure in either the drawings or the specification which would indicate that grippers 16 are capable in any manner of being introduced “between a surface of the pelt board and a leather side of the pelt” so as to retain a lower edge area of the pelt “substantially along the whole periphery of the pelt” as set forth in claim 9

The Examiner has not adequately explained the basis for the statements in his response to arguments and the body of his rejection which are clearly contrary to what is shown and described by Hedegaard. Accordingly, the Examiner is requested to either point to specific aspects of the Hedegaard reference that support his positions that applicant has indicated above to be incorrect and inconsistent with Hedgaard’s disclosure, or to withdrawal the outstanding rejection as applicant submits to be the proper course of action.

Therefore, in the absence of new and more relevant prior art being discovered, this application should now be in condition for allowance and action to that effect is requested. However, while it is believed that this application should now be in condition for allowance, in the event that any issues should remain, or any new issues arise, after consideration of this

response which could be addressed through discussions with the undersigned, then the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned by telephone for the purpose of resolving any such issue and thereby facilitating prompt approval of this application.

Respectfully submitted,



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